

Injuries in Missouri

Focus on Self inflicted Injuries

Focus on Self inflicted

Definitions:

Poisoning – Self inflicted injuries by poisoning include the use of poisonous gases, liquids, or solids substances. These substances may include prescription, over-the-counter or illicit drugs, carbon monoxide poisoning, arsenic, and agricultural or horticultural chemicals.

Cut/Pierce – Self inflicted injuries by cutting or piercing includes the use of knives, broken glass, saws, or other sharp or piercing objects.

Firearms – Self inflicted injuries using firearms includes the use of handguns, shotguns, and rifles.

Suffocate/Hang – Self inflicted injuries by suffocating or hanging includes strangulation, suffocation by plastic bags, and various methods of hanging.

The Problem:

Each year more people are killed by their own hands than are killed by other people. Death by suicide, however, is only a small portion (13 percent) of the attempts to commit suicide. In 1999, 698 Missourians killed themselves, making suicide the tenth leading cause of death. Among 25-34 year old, suicide was the second leading cause of death and the third leading cause of death among 15-24 year olds.

The number of deaths from suicide are far surpassed by the number of hospital outpatient visits and admissions for self inflicted injuries. In 1999, 5351 individuals were recorded by hospital records to have attempted suicide. The rate of males attempting suicide was 81.8 per 100,000 population in 1999, compared to the rate for females at 115.2. Although females attempt suicide at a higher rate than males, males complete suicides at a higher rate (21.8) than females (4.9).

Poisoning was the most frequently used method for self infliction of nonfatal injuries. Poisoning accounted for 80 percent of suicide attempts followed by cutting or piercing as the second most frequent self inflicted injury at 12 percent of attempts. The most frequent method used in completed suicides was firearms.

Evidence-Based Prevention Interventions:

For Individuals/Parents:

- ✓ Restrict access to lethal means for committing suicide, research shows that the presence of firearms in a home is a significant risk factor for youth suicide.
- ✓ Store firearms unloaded and locked, store ammunition in a locked area separate from the firearm.
- ✓ Help children develop skills to solve problems, make informed decisions, communicate, and cope with stress and problems.

Focus on Self inflicted

For Community Leaders and Policy Makers:

- ✓ Develop and support a public awareness message about suicide prevention that is consistent with other communities and any statewide suicide prevention campaigns. This awareness message should include information about suicide risk and protective factors and prevention hotline numbers and crisis centers.
- ✓ Develop and/or support training and education for health care professionals and caregivers about risk factors and techniques to assist those at risk for suicide.
- ✓ Assist local agencies and integrate suicide prevention into other programs targeted to adolescents, men, and senior citizens.
- ✓ Support local efforts to prevent suicide by assessing and acting on local risk or protective factors.
- ✓ Develop an educational campaign to educate senior citizens and their families about the signs and symptoms of clinical depression and the risks and warning signs of suicidal ideation.